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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 000117

SIPDIS
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 2020/02/02
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SO](#) [PINR](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#)
SUBJECT: Somalia - Puntland's Downward Trajectory

REF: NAIROBI 17; NAIROBI 19; 09 NAIROBI 2503

CLASSIFIED BY: Robert Patterson, Counselor for Somalia Affairs, State Department, Somalia Unit; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Puntland Administration President "Farooole" appears increasingly determined to erode the integrity of Puntland political institutions and sideline clan and local leaders (ref al). In addition to a deteriorating political situation, security has continued to decline in Puntland. Gunmen in January killed two Puntland MPs in Bossaso. On January 12, an there was an IED attack on Puntland security forces, and on January 27 an another IED attack on Puntland police. Also in January, a Puntland Intelligence vehicle was targeted by an IED. Al-Shabaab is reportedly making greater inroads in Puntland by exploiting local grievances against "Farooole." Contacts tell us that "Farooole" this month attempted to insulate himself from growing political discontent in Puntland by seeking external backing from Ethiopia and Libya. Puntland opinion makers and some members of the Puntland and TFG administrations are attempting to mitigate "Farooole's" counterproductive behavior (ref c) and encourage "Farooole" to focus on political and security issues. A delegation of nine Puntlanders from the TFG Parliament, at the request of the TFG Speaker, plan in the coming weeks to travel to Puntland.

¶2. (C) Summary and Comment Continued: "Farooole" will use the increase in violence to push for greater international support to his security services. However, we think augmenting Puntland security services without efforts by "Farooole" to address the underlying clan and political tensions in Puntland would enjoy little success. We are urging opinion makers and political players in Puntland to influence "Farooole" and to politically, rather than militarily, confront the Puntland President. While al-Shabaab has long had a presence in Puntland and al-Shabaab leaders certainly have an agenda beyond confronting the Puntland administration, the apparent increasing ability of al-Shabaab leaders to conflate their agenda with local grievances in Puntland is a worrying development. End summary and comment.

"Farooole's" Attack on Puntland
Institutions Creates Friction

¶3. (C) Puntland Administration President "Farooole" appears increasingly determined to erode the integrity of Puntland

political institutions and sideline clan and local leaders. Against the backdrop of criticisms that the Puntland draft constitution gives too much power to the executive and de-fangs the judiciary (ref bl), "Faroole" recently sought an amendment to the draft constitution that would extend Presidential term limits. "Faroole" as well has in recent months appointed his son as Special Media Advisor to the President (reftel), a move that has drawn widespread criticism across Puntland. Additionally, multiple contacts tell us that "Faroole" has sidelined local and clan leaders in Puntland, most recently alienating large sections of his own Isse Mohamud sub-clan. (Note: Puntland is largely composed of the Darod clan, itself divided into multiple sub-clans. End note.)

Attacks on Puntland Officials Increase

14. (C) Against the backdrop of a deteriorating political situation, security has continued to decline in Puntland in recent months. Gunmen in January killed two Puntland MPs in Bossaso. On January 12, there was an IED attack on Puntland security forces and on January 27 an IED was used against Puntland police. Also in January, a Puntland Intelligence vehicle was targeted by an IED.

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Likewise, November and December saw at least six separate targeted attacks on Puntland officials.

Sources of "Faroole's Behavior

15. (C) "Faroole's" counterproductive behavior appears driven, in part, by his personality and the many years he spent outside Somalia. A contact who has known "Faroole" for over fifty years told us that "Faroole" has a rigid personality and described "Faroole" as a "good technocrat but a bad politician." Contacts believe that "Faroole" fails to understand the egalitarian structure of Somali society, due in part to the many years he spend outside Somalia, and consequently does not/not seek consensus when making decisions.

16. (C) "Faroole" reportedly told a close contact that he believed former Puntland President Adde Musa was too "controlled" by the clans and that his administration would be more "civilized." Contacts close to "Faroole" tell us that the Puntland President wants to be viewed by the international community as a Western-educated technocrat. Multiple contacts tell us "Faroole" has sidelined local and clan leaders in Puntland, most recently alienating large sections of his own Isse Mohamud sub-clan. Deeply held grievances across other Darod sub-clans are reportedly erupting now that the Isse Mohamud are publicly criticizing "Faroole."

"Faroole's Conduct Creates

Opening for al-Shabaab

17. (C) Al-Shabaab appears to be making greater inroads in Puntland by exploiting these local grievances against "Faroole."

For example, in January a key sub-clan leader admitted that he knew the identities of all of the extremists in his sub-clan but did not want to turn "his boys" over to "Farooole" because "Farooole" was sidelining the sub-clan. The elder also rationalized that al-Shabaab, unlike in south-central Somalia, was mostly targeting government officials, suggesting that he did not see a great threat to his sub-clan as such.

¶18. (C) (Note: In the early days of the Ethiopian occupation of Mogadishu and until Aden Ayrow stepped up assassinations of his own Ayr sub-clan elders, many Ayr leaders protected Ayrow from the then Abudullahi Yusuf-led TFG. While al-Shabaab has targeted media and civil service leaders in Puntland, the vast majority of attacks in Puntland over recent months have, in fact, been aimed at Puntland government targets. End note.)

¶19. (C) "Farooole" is likely to continue to seek external backers in an effort to insulate himself from growing political discontent in Puntland. Contacts tell us that "Farooole" in January traveled to Ethiopia to seek support for an unpopular cabinet re-shuffle. "Farooole's" goal for the would-be re-shuffle was reportedly to remove key Puntland ministers who were working to contain "Farooole's" autocratic tendencies. (Note: The cabinet reshuffle to date has not occurred. End note.) Our contacts tell us that "Farooole's" January visit to Libya was widely interpreted as another move to seek external support rather than deal with political problems at home.

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TFG Efforts to Do Damage

Control in Puntland

¶10. (C) Puntland opinion makers and some members of the Puntland and TFG administrations are attempting to mitigate "Farooole's" counterproductive behavior (ref c). A delegation of nine Puntlanders from the TFG Parliament, at the request of the TFG Speaker, plan in the coming weeks to travel to Puntland. The agenda will reportedly focus on encouraging "Farooole" to re-engage with the TFG and to build on the August TFG-Puntland agreement (ref c), as well as urging "Farooole" to understand the connection between Puntland's eroding political and security situations.

Comment

¶11. (C) "Farooole" will likely attempt to use the increase in violence to push for greater international support to his security services. We believe, however, that augmenting Puntland security services absent efforts by "Farooole" to address underlying clan and political tensions in Puntland would enjoy little success. We are encouraging opinion makers and political players in Puntland to influence "Farooole" and to encourage Puntlanders to politically, rather than militarily, confront the Puntland President. While al-Shabaab has long had a presence in Puntland and al-Shabaab leaders certainly have an agenda beyond confronting the Puntland administration, the apparent increasing ability of al-Shabaab leaders to conflate their agenda with local grievances in Puntland is a worrying development.

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